

Independent Study

What is an independent study?

An independent study offers students a way to receive academic credit for completing an in-depth examination of a topic related to their course of study. To pursue an independent study, students need to arrange for faculty supervision and submit a proposal for approval that includes the scope of work to complete, the academic value of the project, and the method for performance evaluation. The number of credits that may be earned for an Independent Study is one to six, but usually three.

Student Responsibilities

1. **Arrange for faculty supervision.** The identity of the faculty supervisor, and the nature of the independent study, should be clear from the start. It is advisable to discuss the prospects for completing an independent study with a particular faculty member prior to completing a full proposal. Most students choose to further examine issues or problems first introduced in a particular class, with a particular professor. However, on rare occasions, a student identifies a topic and arranges for supervision by a faculty member that they have not had in class. Please note that the demands of supervising independent studies require each professor to limit the number of independent studies supervised. In this way, students obtaining sponsorship can be assured that faculty will spend the requisite time on the project.
2. **Prepare a proposal** (1-2 pages, typewritten) specifying:
 - the nature and scope of the independent study,
 - the academic value of the independent study (i.e., how it involves academic learning and its logical relationship to the student's course of study), and
 - the method of evaluation for the student's performance on the independent study.
3. **Complete the [Independent Study Registration Form](#).** On-line SPIRE enrollment cannot be used. The Independent Study Form must be electronically signed by the faculty sponsor and Undergraduate [Dean Melvin Rodriguez](#).
4. **Complete the requirements satisfactorily.** Note that the method of evaluation must meet the satisfaction of the faculty supervisor. A range of alternatives is available, including, but not limited to, data collection and analysis, and a library research report.